

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, NL
SUBJ: FORMATION OF NEW DUTCH GOVERNMENT II.

REF: THE HAGUE 3060 (DTG 140844Z JUN 77)

1. WITH THE ADVENT OF SUMMER VACATION PERIOD AND THE FIRST
SUSTAINED SPELL OF GOOD WEATHER THE COUNTRY HAS ENJOYED THIS
YEAR, PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS
DROPPED VIRTUALLY TO ZERO. MOST POLITICAL COMMENTATORS HAVE
GIVEN UP WRITING ABOUT THE SCANT NEWS AVAILABLE AND HAVE GONE
ON VACATION. SUCH HARD NEWS AS EMERGES FROM DEN UYL'S
MEETINGS WITH HIS PROSPECTIVE COALITION PARTNERS BARELY
FINDS ITS WAY TO THE BACK PAGES. AT THIS JUNCTURE THE FOR-
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MATION PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE ALMOST ENTIRELY BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS AND INVOLVES ONLY A SMALL GROUP OF POLITICIANS
FROM THE THREE PARTIES CURRENTLY TRYING TO HAMMER OUT A PROGRAM,
NAMELY PVDA (SOCIALISTS), CDA AND D-66.

2. THE FORMATION EFFORT, WHICH IS NOW OVER SIX WEEKS OLD,
SHOWS NO SIGN OF EARLY COMPLETION. DEN UYL'S APPROACH HAS

BEEN TO HAMMER OUT AGREEMENT ONE BY ONE ON THE FOUR
PIECES OF LEGISLATION (LAND POLICY, WORK COUNCILS, EXCESS
PROFIT SHARING AND SELECTIVE INVESTMENT FUND) WHICH HAVE
BEEN A KEY PART OF HIS PROGRAM. SO FAR BROAD AGREEMENT HAS
BEEN WORKED OUT ONLY ON THE ISSUE OF LAND POLICY. IT IS
UNLIKELY THAT THE OTHERS WILL BE AMENABLE TO QUICK SOLU-
TIONS. FURTHERMORE, THE DIFFICULT ISSUE OF ABORTION LIES
ATHWART DEN UYL'S ROAD TO SUCCESS. PESSIMISTIC FIGURES
ABOUT THE STATE OF THE DUTCH ECONOMY (THE HAGUE 3472)
ADD A FURTHER COMPLICATING FACTOR AS DEN UYL SEARCH-
ES FOR A POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE PACKAGE TO DEAL WITH UNEM-
PLOYMENT AND INFLATION. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THE COMMENT THAT
CDA LEADER VAN AGT, WHO NEEDS TO PLACATE A CHU WING NOT
ENAMORED OF COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIALISTS, CANNOT AFFORD
TO APPEAR TO BE AGREEING TOO EASILY WITH DEN UYL. ALL OF THIS
ADDS UP TO A LONG SUMMER.

3. DEN UYL, WHILE KEEPING HIS CARDS CLOSE TO HIS CHEST,
CONTINUES TO EXUDE AN AIR OF COMPETENCE AND QUIET OPTIMISM
IN HIS OCCASIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT THE FORMATION.
ONE SPECIAL PROBLEM FOR HIM IS THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF D-66
IN THE NEXT CABINET. THERE ARE NO SERIOUS OBSERVERS OF THE POLIT-
ICAL SCENE WHO BELIEVE THAT D'66 CAN REALISTICALLY ASPIRE TO
MORE THAN ONE SEAT IN THE CABINET. IN ANY 7-7-1 COMBINATION,
HOWEVER THIS WOULD GIVE THAT PARTY, WITH ONLY SIX SEATS,
A SWING VOTE, SOMETHING WHICH DEN UYL PROBABLY WOULD BE LOATH
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TO ACCEPT. OF COURSE, ON ONE POINT OR ANOTHER IT MAY YET
BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT, FORCING DEN UYL TO GO BACK
TO THE QUEEN EMPTY-HANDED. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED, HOWEVER,
THAT, IN SUCH AN EVENT, AND AFTER FURTHER EFFORTS BY SOMEONE
ELSE, DEN UYL WILL STILL EMERGE AS PRIME MINISTER OF A SOCIAL-
IST/CDA COALITION. THERE IS EVEN SPECULATION THAT DEN UYL
MIGHT SEE SUCH A SCENARIO AS A CONVENIENT WAY TO RID HIMSELF
OF D'66. IN TERMS OF US INTERESTS, THIS WOULD NOT MAKE
MUCH DIFFERENCE, THOUGH IT WOULD REMOVE FROM THE GOVERNMENT
THE VERY CAPABLE LAURENS BRINKHORST, CURRENTLY STATE SECRE-
TARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHO HAS SPEARHEADED DUTCH PAR-
TICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

4. MEANWHILE, PARLIAMENT IS IN RECESS AND THE CARETAKER
GOVERNMENT IS HANDLING ROUTINE MATTERS. IMPORTANT DECISIONS
ABOUT THE MOLUCCAN PROBLEM, THE DEFENSE BUDGET AND THE ECON-
OMY WILL AWAIT ACTION BY A NEW CABINET. WHILE MOST OF HER
SUBJECTS HAVE STARTED THEIR VACATIONS, THE QUEEN HAS BEEN
FORCED TO POSTPONE--AND MAY HAVE TO CANCEL ALTOGETHER-- HER
CUSTOMARY HOLIDAYS AT PORTO ERCOLE. IN KEEPING WITH TRADITION,
THE FORMATEUR IS CONSULTING WITH HER SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK.
IN THE EVENT OF HIS FAILURE SHE WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE ON

A NEW INDIVIDUAL AND A NEW MANDATE TO CARRY FORWARD THE EFFORT
TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. DEN UYL HAS EXPRESSED THE HOPE
HE WILL BE READY WITH A NEW GOVERNMENT BY AUGUST 23. MAYBE HE
WILL MAKE IT, BUT THE DATE COULD WELL SLIP.
MCCLOSKEY

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